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March 18, 1939
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March 18, 1939

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT ADMINISTRATION
SOUTHERN DIVISION

WHAT ADJUSTMENT CAN FARMERS OF THE SOUTH
MAKE THIS YEAR THAT WILL ENABLE THEM TO IMPROVE
INCOME AND FAMILY LIVING

Talk by Miss Norma M. Brumbaugh, State Home Demonstration Agent,
Oklahoma, at the Southern Regional Conference of Extension Workers,
Knoxville, Tennessee, February 9, 1939.

The production of a food and feed supply that will meet the needs of the farm family is one of the first essentials in a farm and home program. A year around garden that will provide vegetables for canning, storage and use in the fresh state; a home orchard and berry patches to provide fruit; grain that may be converted into ground meal, flour and breakfast cereals; hay and grain crops that will supply feed for work stock and for dairy cows, poultry, hogs, sheep and beef animals used to provide milk, butter, cheese, eggs and meat for the family are essential parts of the farm family's food production program and basic to a food preservation and family nutrition program.

According to the census report, the percentage of Southern farms reporting no milk cows (1/3 farm families in 10 Southern States had no milk cows - 1934) was greater than for any other section except northern New England, and the number of cows on farms reporting was less than for other sections. The percentage of Southern families reporting no chickens (1/7 had no chickens over 3 months old) was about the same as the percentage for the rest of the country, but the average number of chickens on Southern farms was less than for the rest of the country.

The United States Census figures of 1920-1930 show a marked decrease in the number of fruit trees, and it is to be borne in mind that many trees died during the droughts of 1934 and 1936. In Oklahoma we have had a decrease in the bearing and non-bearing trees; apples 62.6%; pears 52.8%; peaches 67.3%; plums 38.6%, and cherries 39.2%. There has also been a decrease in the number of practically all small fruits. Small fruits such as strawberries, blackberries, dewberries and grapes can be brought into bearing quicker than tree fruits, and these small fruits will be more likely to bear annually than the tree fruits.

According to the summary of farm home accounts from our own state, \$354.00 is the average value of farm furnished goods, with an average value of \$270.00 worth of farm furnished food. The average expenditure per family for food is \$186.00. With an increase in the amount of farm furnished food, the amount spent for food will decrease and food dollars can be released for other necessities of living.

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It would seem that the first adjustment needed in a farming program in the South would be an adjustment leading to the production and conservation of a food supply adequate to meet the needs of each family for good health. The contribution of the Extension Service has been and should continue to be a guide to a well balanced food and food supply program based upon family needs and assistance rendered through demonstrations in securing results.

In forwarding a farm family food supply program, we are concerned to know that the provisions of the 1939 farm program offer many possibilities for growing food and feed for home use which may be briefly outlined as follows:

1. The home garden is no longer included in the soil-depleting land use classification.
2. The land used for the growing of home orchards and small fruits is not included in the soil-depleting acreage, dependent however upon whether or not it is interplanted and the kind of crops used in interplanting.
3. The acreage released from the growing of depleting crops may be used for the growing of all crops not classified as depleting and the crops used for the purpose of producing livestock and poultry and their products for home use.
4. Provisions have been made in the 1939 farm program to provide for the small farm to produce adequate food and feed crops.
5. The provisions of the program also encourage the production of quality food and feed crops.

The establishing of wood lots which may serve as a shelter for the house or other buildings where needed, which will conserve the soil and provide a fuel supply for home use is an adjustment that farm families can make to improve income. In Oklahoma, deciduous trees and evergreens can be secured at a nominal sum from the State Forest Commission in lots of one thousand for shelter and wood lot plantings.

Then, any adjustments in farming practices in the South which will build up the soil should eventually improve the income and family living.

For the 1935 crop year, United States farmers spent 21% of their income from all production for the expenses of production. During this same period, farmers in the United States spent over 16% of their income from all production for rent, interest and taxes. The income from all production includes products used on the farm, so the percentage of the cash income used to pay the costs of production and for rent, interest and taxes was even greater (U. S. D. A. Agri. Statistics, 1937).

For 1935, Southern farmers received incomes averaging \$173.00 per person, while farmers in other sections received incomes from \$155.00 for the East Central States to \$481.00 for the Western States (U. S. D. A. Agri. Statistics and U. S. D. A. Bureau of Agri. Ec: "Farm Value, Gross Income and Cash Income from Farm Production"). The sustained low income of the

Southern farmer makes it impossible for him to maintain the house in good condition, to provide the conveniences for the home and farm, and to maintain a desirable food and clothing standard for the family. The total amount of the income that must be spent for subsistence is about the same for all income groups, so the lower income, the less there is to maintain a standard of living above a subsistence level.

Health surveys show that the frequency of illness is high among low income families. Families receiving an income of less than \$1,000.00 per year had 17 percent more disabling illness than families receiving an income of \$3,000.00 or more (U. S. Dept. Treas., National Health Survey, 1935-36).

These conditions again bring out the importance of farm families making such adjustments as will enable them to produce the food needed for the family and the feed needed for workstock and for dairy cows, poultry and meat animals used at home.

A farm program that will help to stabilize cash income is essential to better farm family living in the South. Here, it would seem that an increase in cash income and an increase in farm-furnished goods will depend in part upon a recognition on the part of the family of the need for family planning and a long-time plan for the farm and home. It would also seem that if farm families are to do their best planning that they will need to have a working knowledge of the problems affecting agriculture and their relation to farm family living.

Opportunity for a long period of tenure in the South is still another factor that will enter into the improvement of income and family living. Adjustments in our farming system that will make tenure possible should lead to better homes, a decrease in "soil mining", a better system of farming, an improvement in the health condition of the South, and better supported churches, schools, and other community institutions.

As briefly reviewed, some of the adjustments that farm families of the South can make to improve income and family living are:

1. The production and conservation of a planned food supply based upon the health needs of the farm family.
2. The production of a feed supply for livestock and poultry and their products.
3. The release of food dollars for other necessities of living.
4. The establishing of wood lots to provide fuel for home use, shelter for the house and other buildings, and to conserve the soil.
5. Establishing soil-building practices.
6. A recognition of the need for planning and the provision of adequate information upon which to base plans.
7. Establishing a long-time plan for the farm and home.
8. The improvement of opportunities for tenure.

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